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# What Must Be Done in Bolivia

## The Secretariat, Central Committee, C.P. of Bolivia

*The Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bolivia issued the statement published below on December 27, 1952. It was published on December 31, 1952 in the newspaper La Nación, organ of the Bolivian government, and republished, January 15-18, 1953, in the Chilean newspaper, El Siglo, from which the translation that follows was made. It is brought to our readers as an historic document illuminating conditions in Bolivia, and shedding light upon the whole situation in Latin America —the Editor.*

In this historic hour the Communist Party addresses the Bolivian people to make known its views and to point out the only ways by which the National Revolution can be saved from the serious dangers threatening it.

### WHAT THE PEOPLE FOUGHT FOR ON APRIL 9, 1952

In contrast to all previous changes of government, the one which occurred on April 9 was no mere military *coup*. It was a genuine people's uprising led by our heroic working class, which routed the reactionary army, smashed the ruling of the *Rosca*,\* and brought into power the present government leaders. *The people fought and gave their lives to impose a new state of affairs.*

The people took up arms on April 9 to impose a democratic way of life, with full guarantees for the free functioning of the trade unions and the popular parties; to achieve the nationalization of the mines; to break up the landed estates and give land to the peasants; to stimulate the country's progress by building up a national industry that would assure work and better living conditions for all Bolivians; to put an end to our country's status as a semi-colony and to enable it to live in freedom and respect; to stop Bolivia from being a tool of the Yankee warmongers and to place it firmly and with dignity in the camp of democracy and peace.

For that alone—for its revolutionary and patriotic content—the April 9 uprising deserves the name of National Revolution.

### WHAT HAS BEEN WON SINCE APRIL 9

More than eight months have passed since the heroic days of April. A survey of events that have occurred during this period reveals the following gains, which are of undeniable historic significance: 1) the taking up of arms by the people and their victory over the armed forces of the pro-imperialist *Rosca*; 2) the organization of a Workers' Center; 3) the existence, in great measure, of democratic guarantees, thanks to which the popular parties and mass organizations have organized and are functioning; 4) the nationalization of the mines; and 5) the right of universal suffrage.

### WHAT MUST STILL BE DONE

But the gains made since April 9 are only a small part of the task that has to be accomplished.

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\* Name popularly given to the group dominating the tin industry.—*Ed.*

In the first place, we must firmly consolidate our gains up to now. In the second place, we must advance boldly to achieve broader aims.

The people in arms made possible the new state of affairs. Only the armed people will be able to defend the Revolution and assure its final success. For that reason, the Government must clearly understand that we Bolivians *need no other armed force but the one which arose out of the April 9th uprising*. Consequently, instead of continuing to maintain or trying to reorganize other armed forces outside the control of the working class, the Government—in accordance with promises made on numerous occasions by President Paz Estenssoro—must recognize the urgent need of giving more arms to the workers and peasants. The growing alliance between workers and peasants will be greatly strengthened by the organization of a people's militia controlled and led by the workers' and peasants' trade unions. That is the bulwark of our revolution and the sole guarantee of an effective peace within the country.

The heroic sacrifices of the working class gave our people victory on April 9. In the road that lies ahead the working class will continue to occupy its vanguard position. That is why it is in the vital interest of all Bolivian patriots to strengthen the organization and unity of our heroic working class. The unity of Bolivian workers is on the point of being achieved through the Bolivian Workers' Center (C.O.B.). But this unity, which our people ardently desire, is now menaced by repeated attempts to undermine the class independence of the Bolivian proletariat and to introduce anti-democratic practices into the trade unions. Consequently, our revolution demands that the Workers' Center fight energetically for the following aims: a) broad and effective trade-union unity; b) maintenance of an independent political line, serving the interests of the working class; c) permanent practice of trade-union democracy at all levels; d) greater and permanent participation of the working class in the political leadership of the country. As regards this final point, the working-class ministers in the cabinet must always realize that they represent the Workers' Center in the government and are not government representatives in the C.O.B. At the same time, however, it must be clearly understood that the relations between the working class and the government are now relations of a new type in our country, inasmuch as we now have in Bolivia a government of a new type. These relations must be those of two allies: the working class and the present government can march united in the struggle to achieve our country's liberation; and the working class will support and defend the government's work so long as this work does not depart from the aims of the agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution.

As far as nationalization of the mines is concerned, it is necessary to point out that the great step of October 31 has not yet been consolidated in all its aspects. The transfer of the mines from the hands of the *Rosca* clique to those of the government does not yet mean that our country has ceased to be a satellite of the war economy of the United States. The government, after nationalizing the mines, has confined itself to declaring that it will sell our minerals to whoever wants to buy them; but, instead of deciding to sell them to those countries which need them in order to build a world of peace and well-being, it has promised to limit these sales to the needs of the U.S. market. In other words, it will sell to those who have always protected the *Rosca* clique and do not want the existence of an independent Bolivia. This attitude not only infringes on our national sovereignty and keeps Bolivia in the war camp, it directly affects the economic situation of our people; for without active international trade and without a native industry of our own, scarcity of commodities and inflation enormously increase the cost of living. Even more: the promise to keep our country chained to the North American market furnishes the enemies of our country with the most effective weapon for stifling the revolution by means of hunger and for preparing a counter-revolutionary *coup d'état*.

Nationalization of the mines must, therefore, be accompanied by the immediate establishment of diplomatic and trade relations with the countries in the camp of peace and by the sale of our minerals on the free market. This will constitute the first practical step designed to ward off economic crisis and to consolidate our national sovereignty.

#### AGRARIAN REFORM CANNOT BE POSTPONED

Bolivia's future does not, however, depend exclusively on the sale of our minerals. There is no reason why we should resign ourselves to being eternally a single-commodity country. Our soil can furnish us with all the articles of construction necessary for our subsistence. If this has not hitherto been the case, it is because the imperialists and our own landlords have distorted our economy so as to serve their own exclusive interests. Nationalization of the mines and the sale of our minerals on the free market are not enough. The National Revolution—if it is to be one in fact as well as name—must therefore proceed with *agrarian reform*. That means: *confiscation of the landed estates and the free distribution of land to the working peasants—farm laborers, tenant farmers, poor and middle farmers—for them to work individually or collectively, as they choose*. This task can no longer be postponed. There are three basic reasons why it must be carried through at once: 1) to end the semi-feudal form of exploitation based on absolute rent (which is profit made by absentee landlords without any capital investment and simply by virtue of holding title to the land); 2) to save the people from hunger and crisis; 3) to disarm the reactionary conspiracy of the *Rosca*, the big landlords, the Falangists, and the Trotskyites, who have spread the slogan not to sow the land, with the deliberate aim of sabotaging the revolution. In this way, too, the economic power of the enemies of the people will be liquidated once and for all.

The Government must clearly recognize that so long as the country remains in a semi-feudal state, there will be no way of laying the foundations of our economic independence or of assuring our people's advance along the road to effective material and cultural progress.

Agrarian reform, liquidating once and for all the backward forms of life and exploitation in the countryside, is the most important step that remains to be taken in the struggle for our national liberation. It concerns not only the peasants but the nation as a whole: the manufacturers will benefit, because with the increase in purchasing power of more than two million peasants, they will be able to enjoy a rapid increase in the sale of their manufactured goods; the merchants and professionals will also benefit for the same reason. Within a short time the whole country will enjoy the advantages of this great step, because if the economic conditions of the majority of the Bolivian people are improved, tax receipts and domestic business will increase. Thus it will be possible to carry out a real program of improvement in the entire economic life of the nation.

#### THE IMPERIALIST CONSPIRACY MUST BE CRUSHED!

Agrarian reform is, moreover, the basic solution in the face of the powerful menace presented by the conspiracy of Yankee imperialism with our own big landlords and *Rosca* clique. The spearhead of that menace at the present time is the *Falange Socialista Boliviano* (Bolivian Socialist Phalanx) and the reactionary elements which have infiltrated the National Revolutionary Movement (M.N.R.). These are aided by the Trotskyites (*poristas*) and their provocations. All of them seek to bring about hunger and demoralization so as to create a favorable situation for their putschist plans, hoping thus to undo in a moment everything that has been done for the people and the country since April 9. They want things to be as they were under the Urriola government and that of the military junta. The choice, therefore, is clear: either this anti-popular and anti-Bolivian conspiracy of the imperialists and the *Rosca* is allowed

to develop, or it is nipped in the bud by means of the agrarian reform. Hence, this reform must be put into effect immediately, without fear or wavering. To all those who advise lengthy preliminary studies or “gradual” methods of agrarian reform by liquidating “non-productive” estates or “mechanizing” untilled lands, we must reply as follows: any delay or substitute method is merely a way of protecting the reactionary conspiracy, of giving the agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution a stab in the back.

#### LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR THE COUNTRY’S INDUSTRIALIZATION

The sale of our minerals on the free market and a consistent program of agrarian reform must be followed by the immediate industrialization of the country. This step will enable us to provide the main articles of consumption and create new items for export. Consequently, it is imperative that the government lose no time in setting up a Planning Commission charged with making a thorough study of the industrialization of the country.

History knows only one course of development — only one road — by which mankind can march forward. We all know that this road is not free of obstacles and difficulties. But the experience of all periods and all peoples, as well as our own experience, shows us that the only way to overcome these obstacles is by resolutely coping with them. Every attempt to look for short cuts, to halt midway, to make compromises with the enemy or to delay solutions will ultimately prove futile and harmful, for the enemies of progress do not rest or remain quiet. Bolivar and Sucre, when they won national independence for us, had to reject flatly any compromise idea of giving us a mere protectorate instead of a republic. The great uprising of Tupac Amaru and Tupac Katari lost time and momentum in the vain effort to make the King of Spain and his representatives listen to reason.

Since April 9, Bolivia has traveled a considerable way along the road of true independence. What is more, it has only begun the journey. Without having yet completed its first stage, the National Revolution has entered a period of marking time. The facts enumerated above indicate that it is not simply a question of a breathing-spell but of a partial truce which benefits the enemy. This indecision must therefore end. The forward march must be resumed: the great task begun by the working class and the people on April 9 must be completed.

But the waverings and weaknesses impeding the advance of the revolution are not exclusively the result of personal shortcomings in some of the government representatives. A people’s revolution cannot be the exclusive work of a group of men or of a single party. A people’s revolution is the work of the people themselves—of all progressive and militant elements of the people. It can only be the result of common efforts on the part of all the popular parties, of all the progressive forces, and especially of the organized working class in close alliance with the peasantry. That is why the victorious uprising of April 9 was not carried through by one party alone: the entire Bolivian people fought side by side with the working class and the active members of the M.N.R. The Communist Party, vanguard of the working class, also took an active and outstanding part in it; so too did non-party workers and peasants, men and women, young and old— all united in a supreme effort to free Bolivia forever from the domination of the *Rosca* and imperialism. Similarly, the immense majority of Bolivians irrespective of party, class, opinion, or religious beliefs were and are in complete accord concerning the nationalization of the mines.

Furthermore, this move is supported by all the peoples of South America, particularly the working class and the peasantry, who see in the April 9 uprising an example for them to follow in their anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle. The revolution begun on April 9 is, therefore, a revolution which belongs not only to the Bolivian people but to all the oppressed peoples of our

Continent; and it is part of the great front of world struggle for the national liberation of all colonial peoples subjugated by aggressive Anglo-American imperialism. If in the past Bolivia was the first in point of time to rebel against the hateful Spanish yoke, today it has placed itself at the head of the peoples of America, raising the banner of economic and social independence against the shameful yoke of North American imperialism. This means that if the Bolivian Revolution fulfills the people's aspirations for peace, liberty, and well-being, it will occupy an honorable place alongside the Chinese Revolution and the revolutions in the People's Democracies. It means, moreover, that Bolivia can become the most consistent and resolute standard-bearer of world peace against war in the Americas.

The popular and national character of the Bolivian Revolution and its international significance demand, therefore, that our entire people unite to bring it to full realization. All the people, especially the progressive elements, must understand that the agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution has not ended with the victorious uprising or the nationalization of the mines. They must understand that it will not be carried through to completion by waiting for a single party or for the government alone to achieve it. The revolution does not come by itself; it must be won. But to win it, we must organize it. If the National Revolution is the concern of all patriotic and progressive elements, it is also necessary that all of these be organized and united in a powerful *Patriotic Front of National Liberation*. The vacillations we have observed up to now arise above all from the isolation and dispersion of the revolutionary forces. Unswerving aims and consistent deeds require, on the contrary, the unity of all the fighting forces, backed by an organized and united people. If the April 9 uprising was the work of the united people who took to arms, the Revolution of National Liberation, an agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution, must therefore be the work of a *National Front of Liberation*—a broad united front of the people against imperialism and the *Rosca*.

That is why the Communist Party, which from its formation at the beginning of 1950, has oriented the struggle of our people toward national liberation, today issues this fervent appeal to all the progressive elements to set up without delay this great *Patriotic Front of National Liberation*. We appeal to the National Revolutionary Movement (M.N.R.), to the anti-imperialist elements in the other parties, to the Bolivian Workers' Center, to the peasantry, to the revolutionary students, to the progressive intellectuals, to all non-party men and women who are anti-imperialist and patriotic, to all those who long for a free and prosperous country and a better life, to all those who love peace, happiness, and the well-being of our children. We appeal to you all to form a powerful *Patriotic Front of National Liberation*, on whose banner of struggle will be inscribed the following tasks arising from the historic moment in which we are living:

- 1) Sale of our minerals on the free market.
- 2) Agrarian reform, expropriating the landed estates by means of confiscation and giving free land to the farm laborers, tenant farmers, poor and middle farmers, and the communes.
- 3) State monopoly of foreign trade.
- 4) Effective workers' control in the nationalized mines.
- 5) Greater participation of the working class in the government.
- 6) Strengthening of the people's militia, on the basis of a democratic and unified structure; and furnishing more arms to the workers' and peasants' trade unions.
- 7) Guarantees for the full development of trade-union unity and independence. Broad democratic liberties for the people; vigorous measures of revolutionary vigilance against the conspiratorial forces of imperialism and the *Rosca*.
- 8) Denunciation and abrogation of the shameful and illegal Keenleyside colonization plan

and of the war treaties imposed by North American imperialism at the Conferences of Bogota, Rio de Janeiro, and Washington. Expulsion of the United States military mission, whose presence is an insult to our national sovereignty.

9) Establishment of diplomatic and trade relations with the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, and the People's Democracies, as the only way of assuring the purchase of our minerals on favorable terms and the independent development of our national economy.

10) A foreign policy directed unswervingly at taking Bolivia out of the war camp and into the camp of peace, as a means of insuring the further development of our National Revolution.

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This is the program we must fight for, united and without faltering, in order to safeguard the future of Bolivia, crush the conspiracy of imperialism and the *Rosca*, and consolidate the historic National Revolution begun on April 9.

This is the program that will give the Bolivian people peace, land, culture, and a better life.

Let us not forget that our National Anthem teaches us the road to follow: "Let us preserve the lofty name of our country in glorious splendor and at its altars let us again swear to die rather than to live as slaves."